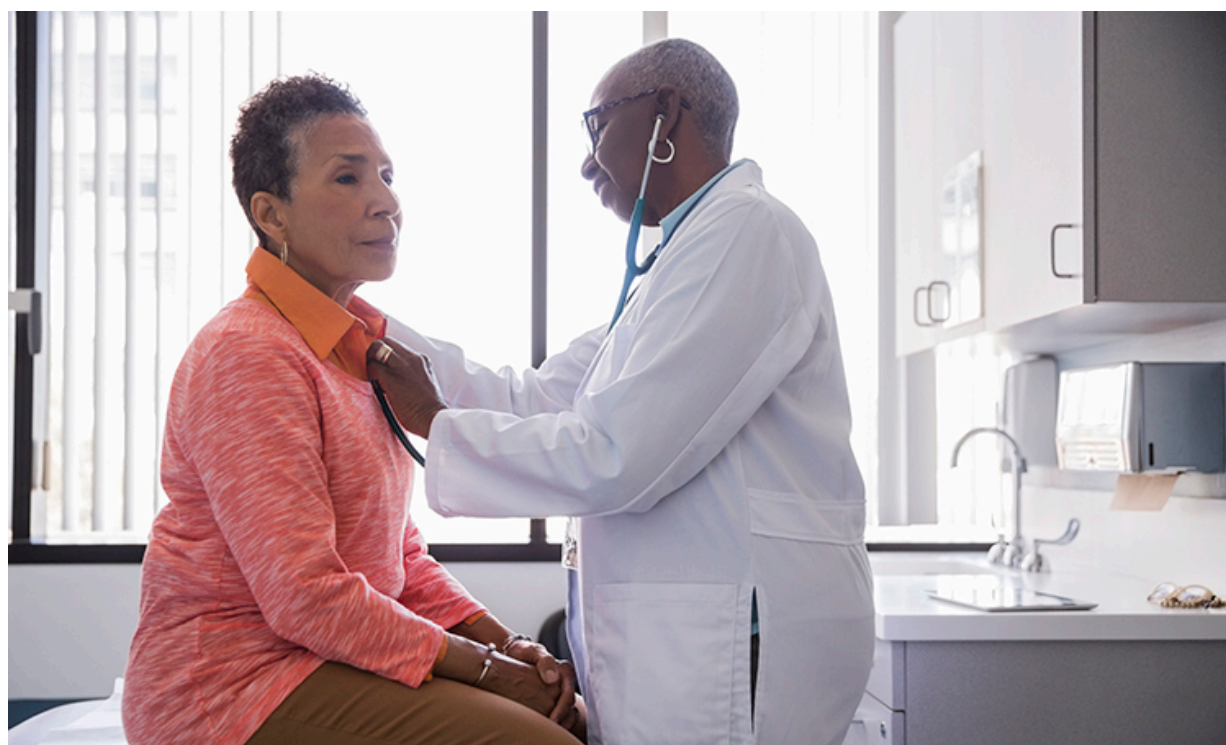


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By Jenny Sinclair

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Focus science on New Zealanders, health group says

New Zealanders for Health Research wants funding model for science to consider NZ needs first

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Planned reforms to New Zealand's science funding system should put a strong emphasis on the benefits of research for New Zealanders, a medical research campaign group has said.

New Zealanders for Health Research has been holding industry meetings on the Future Pathways green paper published last year by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The green paper proposes sweeping changes to the way science and research are funded in New Zealand, with everything from the priorities for research spending to the shape of public science institutions on the table for discussion.

According to NZHR head Chris Higgins, the group's members want better overall funding and more attention for the translation of research.

A draft submission from NZHR sets out principles for establishing research priorities, including "imminent and serious" environmental and health risks, opportunities for "economic prosperity", Māori priorities and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.

The body will also push for its long-term goal of direct government investment in health research to be increased to 2.4 per cent of health system spending.

It calls for changes to reduce competition for resources between disciplines, and it wants a "Crown Research Institute-like" body to be established to drive health research.

Further submissions

Stakeholders in the research system are preparing their submissions on the green paper ahead of a more detailed white paper to be released by the ministry later this year.

AgriTech New Zealand says its submission will include comments on skills, relationships and the overall shape of the research system. Among other groups writing submissions are BioTech New Zealand, the Māori business network Te Taumata, the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, the metals industry group Hera, Genomics for Aotearoa New Zealand, and several individuals and postgraduate student groups.

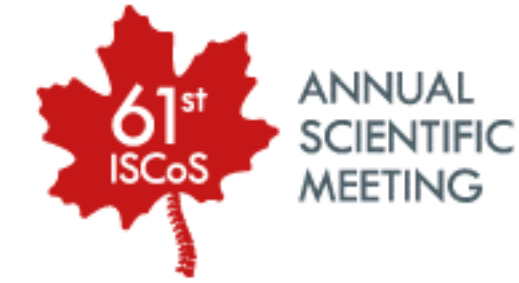
Submissions on the green paper are due by 16 March.

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